

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BELIZE 0067

E. O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR,BH,GT,UK

SUBJECT: GOB VIEWS ON UK-GUATEMALA TALKS

1. PURPOSE OF THIS TELEGRAM IS TO REPORT WHAT APPEARS TO BE A FUNDAMENTAL DISPARITY BETWEEN GOB AND GOG IN REGARD TO PREMISES ON WHICH UK-GOG TALKS, NOW SET FOR FEB. 9, ARE TO BE BASED.

2. IN COURSE OF JANUARY 23 CALL ON GOVERNOR POSNETT BY DIRECTOR OR ARA/CEN WEISSMAN AND MYSELF GOVERNOR SAID HE WAS CONCERNED BY PRICE'S REFUSAL SO FAR TO AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN TALKS. WITHOUT PRICE, H. E. THOUGHT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO CONDUCT THE SORT OF FREE-WHEELING, UNFETTERED BARGAINING SITUATION OBVIOUSLY REQUIRED. CONSEQUENTLY, ANY AGREEMENT REACHED WOULD HAVE TO BE AD REFERENDUM TO GOB. ACCORDING TO H. E., HMG DID NOT EXPECT TO BE ABLE TO PRESSURE PRICE INTO ACCEPTING ANY TERMS OF A PROPOSED AGREEMENT THE PREMIER DEEMED POLITICALLY UNSALABLE TO BELIZEAN PUBLIC. CONSEQUENTLY, GOVERNOR THOUGHT PRICE'S PARTICIPATION A PRACTICAL NECESSITY.

3. LATER IN THE DAY, WEISSMAN AND I HAD TWO-HOUR LUNCHEON
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CONVERSATION WITH PREMIER AND MEMBERS OF HIS CABINET INCLU-

DING DEPUTY PREMIER ROGERS AND ATTORNEY GENERAL SHOMAN WHO ARE PRICE'S PRESENT ADVISERS ON GUATEMALA DISPUTE. ONE NOTE WHICH WAS STRUCK SEVERAL TIMES IN COURSE OF WIDE-RANGING CONVERSATION WAS INDIGNATION OVER CONDITION IMPUTED TO GOG THAT TALKS MUST IGNORE RECENT UNGA RESOLUTION AND SHOULD, IN FACT, PROCEED UNDER PRETENSE THAT RECENT EVENTS AT UN HAD NEVER HAPPENED. WE WERE TOLD THERE HAD BEEN PUBLICITY TO THIS EFFECT IN GUATEMALAN MEDIA.

4. IT IS PERHAPS NOT SURPRISING THAT PRICE AND ASSOCIATES, WHO ARE STILL BASKING IN A FEELING OF HARD-WON, SELF-RIGHTEOUS VINDICATION AS A RESULT OF THEIR UN SUCCESS, HAVE A VISCERAL OBJECTION TO THIS CONDITION.

5. IF MY RECOLLECTION OF CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH IDEA OF RENEWED TALKS ORIGINATED IS CORRECT, GOG MAY INDEED BE HOPING TALKS CAN BE HELD WITH NO REFERENCE TO UNGA RESOLUTION.

6. THE ABOVE IS REPORTED AS A PREFACE TO INQUIRING WHETHER THERE IS ANYTHING THAT MIGHT BE DONE TO GET THE GUATEMALANS TO REFRAIN FROM PUBLICIZING THIS CONDITION OR AT LEAST TO SOFT-PEDAL IT TO THE EXTENT NECESSARY TO GET PRICE TO GO TO NEW ORLEANS. OTHERWISE, CHANCES THAT TALKS WILL BE FRUITFUL MAY BE SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED.

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